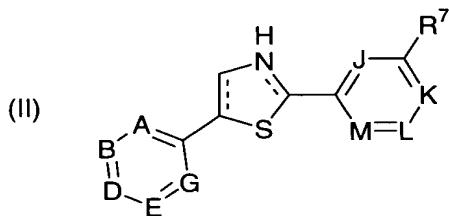
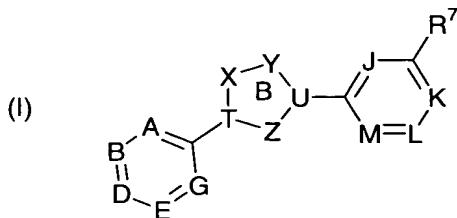


CLAIMS

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A compound according to structural formula (I) or (II):



5

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, hydrate, solvate or N-oxide thereof,
wherein:

the B ring is an aromatic or nonaromatic ring that includes from one to
four heteroatoms, wherein

10 X, Y, Z are each, independently of one another selected from C, CH, N,
 NR^{16} , NR^{18} , S or O, provided that X and Y are not both O;

U and T are each, independently of one another, selected from C, CH or N;

Z is N or -CH-;

A is N or - CR^2- ;

15 B is N or - CR^3- ;

D is N or - CR^4- ;

E is N or - CR^5- ;

G is N or - CR^6- ;

J is N or -CR¹⁴-;

K is N or -CR⁸-;

L is N or -CR⁹-;

M is N or -CR¹⁰-;

5 R² and R⁶ are each, independently of one another, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halo, fluoro, chloro, alkyl, methyl, substituted alkyl, alkylthio, substituted alkylthio, alkoxy, methoxy, *i*-propoxy, substituted alkoxy, alkoxy carbonyl, substituted alkoxy carbonyl, arylalkyloxycarbonyl, substituted arylalkyloxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, substituted aryloxycarbonyl, cycloheteroalkyl, substituted 10 cycloheteroalkyl, carbamoyl, substituted carbamoyl, haloalkyl, trifluoromethyl, sulfamoyl, substituted sulfamoyl and silyl ethers, provided that one of R² and R⁶ is other than hydrogen;

15 R³ and R⁵ are each, independently of one another, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halo, chloro, alkyl, substituted alkyl, alkylthio, substituted alkylthio, alkoxy, substituted alkoxy, alkoxy carbonyl, substituted alkoxy carbonyl, arylalkyloxycarbonyl, substituted arylalkyloxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, substituted aryloxycarbonyl, cycloheteroalkyl, substituted cycloheteroalkyl, carbamoyl, substituted carbamoyl, haloalkyl, sulfamoyl and substituted sulfamoyl;

20 R⁴ is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halo, alkyl, substituted alkyl, alkylthio, substituted alkylthio, carbamoyl, substituted carbamoyl, alkoxy, substituted alkoxy, alkoxy carbonyl, substituted alkoxy carbonyl, arylalkyloxycarbonyl, substituted arylalkyloxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, substituted aryloxycarbonyl, dialkylamino, substituted dialkylamino, haloalkyl, sulfamoyl and substituted sulfamoyl;

25 R⁷ is -NR¹¹C(O)R¹²;

R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰ and R¹⁴ are each, independently of one another, hydrogen, halo or fluoro;

R¹¹ is hydrogen, alkyl or methyl; and

R^{12} is selected from the group consisting of substituted alkyl, haloalkyl, halomethyl, dihalomethyl, dichloromethyl, cycloheteroalkyl and substituted cycloheteroalkyl;

R^{16} and R^{18} are each, independently of one another, selected from the

5 group consisting of hydrogen, lower alkyl, substituted lower alkyl, lower heteroalkyl, substituted lower heteroalkyl, cycloalkyl, substituted cycloalkyl, cycloheteroalkyl, substituted cycloheteroalkyl, lower haloalkyl, monohalomethyl, dihalomethyl, trihalomethyl, trifluoromethyl, lower alkylthio, substituted lower alkylthio, lower alkoxy, substituted lower alkoxy, methoxy, substituted methoxy, lower heteroalkoxy, substituted

10 lower heteroalkoxy, cycloalkoxy, substituted cycloalkoxy, cycloheteroalkoxy, substituted cycloheteroalkoxy, lower haloalkoxy, monohalomethoxy, dihalomethoxy, trihalomethoxy, trifluoromethoxy, lower di- or monoalkylamino, substituted lower di- or monoalkylamino, aryl, substituted aryl, aryloxy, substituted aryloxy, phenoxy, substituted phenoxy, arylalkyl, substituted arylalkyl, arylalkyloxy, substituted arylalkyloxy, benzyl,

15 benzyloxy, heteroaryl, substituted heteroaryl, heteroaryloxy, substituted heteroaryloxy, heteroarylalkyl, substituted heteroarylalkyl, heteroarylalkyloxy, substituted heteroarylalkyloxy, carboxyl, lower alkoxycarbonyl, substituted lower alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, substituted aryloxycarbonyl, arylalkyloxycarbonyl, substituted arylalkyloxycarbonyl, carbamate, substituted carbamate, carbamoyl, substituted carbamoyl, sulfamoyl, substituted sulfamoyl and a group of the formula $-L-R^{17}$, where

20 "L" is a linker and R^{17} is cycloalkyl, substituted cycloalkyl, cycloheteroalkyl or substituted cycloheteroalkyl.

with the provisos that:

- 25 (i) at least one of A, B, D, E, G, J, K, L or M is N;
- (ii) no more than one of A, B, D, E or G is N; and
- (iii) no more than one of J, K, L or M is N.

2. The compound of Claim 1 in which one of A, B, D, E or G is N and one of J, K, L or M is N.

3. The compound of Claim 1 in which one of A, B, D, E or G is N and none of J, K, L or M is N.

4. The compound of Claim 1 in which none of A, B, D, E or G is N and one of J, K, L or M is N.

5 5. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B-ring is an oxazole or hydro isomer thereof.

6. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B ring is a thiazole or a hydro isomer thereof.

7. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B ring is an imidazole or a hydro isomer thereof.

8. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B ring is a triazole or a hydro isomer thereof.

9. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B ring is an oxadiazole or a hydro isomer thereof.

15 10. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B ring is an isoxazole or a hydro isomer thereof.

11. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B ring is a pyrazole or a hydro isomer thereof.

12. The compound of Claim 1 in which the B ring is a thiadiazole or a hydro isomer thereof.

20 13. The compound of any one of Claims 1-12 in which R⁷ is -NR¹¹C(O)R¹², wherein R¹¹ is hydrogen or methyl and R¹² is -CHCl₂.

14. The compound of Claim 13 in which X is N, Y is O and Z is -CH-.

25 15. The compound of any one of Claims 1- 13 in which A is -CR²-, G is -CR⁶-, R⁷ is -NR¹¹C(O)R¹², where R¹¹ is hydrogen or methyl and R¹² is -CHCl₂.

16. The compound of Claim 15 in which B is -CR³-, D is N, E is -CR⁵-, J is -CR¹⁴-, K is -CR⁸-, L is -CR⁹-, M is -CR¹⁰-, and R³, R⁵, R⁹, R¹⁰ and R¹⁴ are each hydrogen.

17. The compound of Claim 16 in which R⁸ is fluorine.

5 18. The compound of Claim 15 in which B is -CR³-, D is -CR⁴-, E is -CR⁵-, J is -CR¹⁴-, K is -CR⁸-, L is -CR⁹-, M is N and R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁴ are each hydrogen.

19. The compound of Claim 15 in which B is -CR³-, D is -CR⁴-, E is -CR⁵-, J is -CR¹⁴-, K is -CR⁸-, L is N, M is -CR¹⁰- and R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁸, R¹⁰ and R¹⁴ are each hydrogen.

10 20. The compound of any one of Claims 15-19 in which R² and R⁶ are each, independently of one another, selected from the group consisting of chloro, fluoro, methyl, trifluoromethyl, thiomethyl, methoxy, *i*-propoxy, N-morpholino and N-morpholinosulfamoyl.

15 21. The compound of any one of Claims 15-19 in which R² and R⁶ are each, independently of one another, selected from the group consisting of chloro, fluoro, methyl, trifluoromethyl, methoxy or *i*-propoxy.

22. The compound of any one of Claims 15-19 in which R² and R⁶ are each the same or different halo.

23. The compound of any one of Claims 15-19 in which X is N, Y is O and Z
20 is -CH-.

24. The compound of Claim 1 in which A is -CR²-, G is -CR⁶- and R⁷ is -NR¹¹C(O)R¹², where R¹¹ is hydrogen or methyl and R¹² is -CH₂I.

25. The compound of Claim 24 in which R² and R⁶ are each, independently of one another, selected from the group consisting of chloro, fluoro, methyl, trifluoromethyl, thiomethyl, methoxy, *i*-propoxy, N-morpholino and N-morpholinosulfamoyl.

26. The compound of Claim 24 in which R² and R⁶ are each, independently of one another, selected from the group consisting of chloro, fluoro, methyl, trifluoromethyl, methoxy and *i*-propoxy.

27. The compound of Claim 24 in which R² and R⁶ are each the same or different halo.

28. The compound of Claim 24 in which X is N, Y is O and Z is -CH-.

29. The compound of Claim 1 in which A is -CR²-, B is -CR³-, R⁷ is
5 -NR¹¹C(O)R¹², where R¹¹ is hydrogen or methyl and R¹² is -CHCl₂.

30. The compound of Claim 29 in which D is -CR⁴-, G is -CR⁶-, E is -CR⁵-, J is -CR¹⁴-, K is -CR⁸-, L is -CR⁹-, M is N and R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁴ are each hydrogen.

31. The compound of Claim 29 in which D is -CR⁴-, G is -CR⁶-, E is -CR⁵-, J is -CR¹⁴-, K is -CR⁸-, L is N, M is -CR¹⁰- and R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁸, R¹⁰ and R¹⁴ are each hydrogen.

32. The compound of any one of Claims 29-31 in which R² is chloro, fluoro, methyl, trifluoromethyl, thiomethyl, methoxy, *i*-propoxy, N-morpholino or N-morpholinosulfamoyl and R³ is chloro, fluoro, methyl, trifluoromethyl or methoxy

15 33. The compound of any one of Claims 29-31 in which R² is chloro, fluoro, methyl, trifluoromethyl or methoxy and R³ is chloro, fluoro or trifluoromethyl.

34. The compound of any one of Claims 29-31 in which R² and R³ are each the same or different halo.

35. The compound of any one of Claims 29-31 in which X is N, Y is O and Z
20 is -CH-.

36. The compound of Claim 1 in which A is -CR²-, G is -CR⁶- and R² and R⁶ are each identical, provided that R² and R⁶ are not hydrogen.

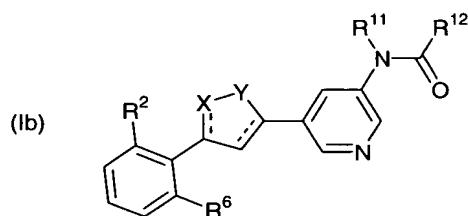
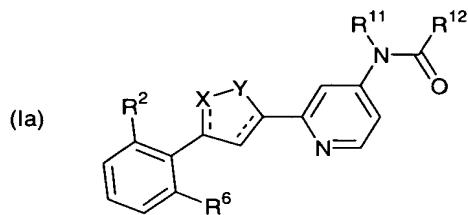
37. The compound of Claim 1 in which A is -CR²-, B is -CR³- and R² and R³ are each identical, provided that R² and R³ are not hydrogen.

25 38. The compound of Claim 1 in which B is -CR³-, E is -CR⁵- and R³ and R⁵ are each identical, provided that R³ and R⁵ are not hydrogen.

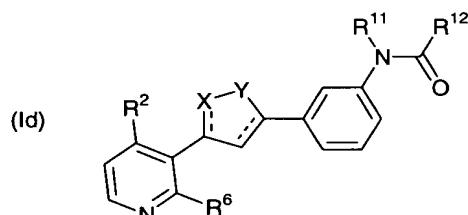
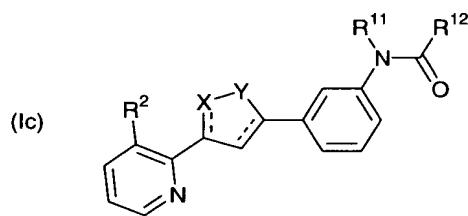
39. The compound of Claim 1 in which B is -CR³-, D is -CR⁴-, E is -CR⁵-, J is -CR¹⁴-, K is -CR⁸- and R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁸ and R¹⁴ are each hydrogen.

40. The compound of Claim 1 in which -D is -CR⁴-, E is -CR⁵-, G is CR⁶, J is -CR¹⁴-, K is -CR⁸- and R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁸ and R¹⁴ are each hydrogen.

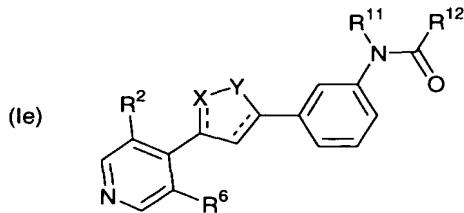
5 41. The compound of Claim 1 which has the structural formula (Ia), (Ib), (Ic),
(Id) or (Ie):



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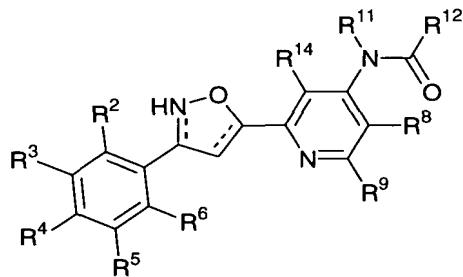


or pharmaceutically acceptable salts, hydrates or solvates thereof, wherein X, Y, R², R⁶, R¹¹ and R¹² are as previously defined for Claim 1 and --- represents a single or
5 double bond.

42. The compound of Claim 41 in which R¹¹ is hydrogen, R¹² is dichloromethyl and R² and R⁶ are each, independently of one another, selected from the group consisting of halo, fluoro, chloro, trifluoromethyl and methoxy.

43. The compound of Claim 1 which has the structural formula (If):

10



or pharmaceutically acceptable salts, hydrates or solvates thereof, wherein R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁸, R⁹, R¹¹, R¹² and R¹⁴ are as previously defined for Claim 1 and subject to the same provisos and --- represents a single or double bond.

15

44. A compound selected from the group of compounds depicted in FIG. 1, which inhibits HCV replication and/or proliferation with an IC₅₀ of 100μM or less, as measured in an *in vitro* assay.

45. The compound of Claim 44 which has an IC₅₀ of 10μM or less.

20

46. A method of inhibiting replication or proliferation of a hepatitis C (“HC”) virion, comprising the step of contacting a HC virion with an amount of a compound of any one of Claims 1- 12 effective to inhibit replication of the HC virion.

47. The method of Claim 46 which is practiced *in vitro*.
48. The method of Claim 46 which is practiced *in vivo*.
49. A method of treating or preventing an HCV infection, comprising the steps of administering to a subject an effective amount of a compound of any one of Claims 1-
5 12 effective to treat or prevent an HCV infection.
50. The method of Claim 49, wherein the subject is a human.
51. The method of Claim 49, wherein the compound is administered in an amount of 0.1 mg/kg to 200 mg/kg.
52. The method of Claim 49, wherein the compound is administered in an
10 amount of 10 mg/kg to 100 mg/kg.
53. The method of Claim 49, wherein the compound is administered orally.
54. The method of Claim 49, wherein the compound is administered by injection.
55. The method of Claim 49, wherein the compound is selected from the
15 group of compounds depicted in FIG. 1 and which inhibits HCV replication and/or proliferation with an IC₅₀ of about 10μM or less, as measured in an *in vitro* assay.
56. The method of Claim 49 which is practiced therapeutically in a subject having an HCV infection.
57. The method of Claim 49 which is practiced prophylactically in a subject at
20 risk of developing an HCV infection.
58. A composition comprising a compound of any one of Claims 1-12 and a pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle.